



On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "Barefoot Boy With Cheek," etc.)

DECEMBER AND MAY: ACT II

Synopsis of Act I: A middle-aged English Professor named Phipps has fallen desperately in love with a rosy-kneed coed named McPetridge. Phipps doesn't know how to go about courting Miss McPetridge, for, after all, he is a professor in the autumn of his life, and she is a coed with rosy knees. Professor Twonkey, who shares an office with Phipps, proposes the following plan: Phipps will ask Miss McPetridge to come to his office for a conference late in the afternoon. He will be urbane and charming and make frightfully witty remarks about English lit, and Miss McPetridge will laugh and laugh. After an hour of this high-type hilarity, Phipps will look at his watch, exclaim at the lateness of the hour, and insist on driving Miss McPetridge home. On the way home, he will pass a theatre that shows French movies. They'll see the movie, then have an exquisite French dinner, and Miss McPetridge will be so enchanted that she cannot but yield to his suit.

So at the beginning of Act II, we find Phipps in his office awaiting the arrival of the poor young innocent. His hair is brushed; his nails are clean; he has new leather patches on his elbows. There is a knock on the door. He opens it and admits a gorgeous creature with blue eyes and pink kneecaps.

PHIPPS: Ah, Miss McPetridge. Come in, my dear. Won't you sit down? Cigarette?

MISS MCF: Ooh, Philip Morris! I think they're marvy, don't you?

PHIPPS: I do indeed.

MISS MCF: Hey, prof, would you mind opening a fresh pack?

PHIPPS: But I just opened this one a little while ago. It's perfectly fresh.

MISS MCF: I know, prof, but I like to hear the snap when the pack opens.

PHIPPS: Very well, my dear.

(He opens a fresh snap-open pack of Philip Morris. Miss McPetridge claps her hands delightedly when she hears the snap.)

MISS MCF: Hey, that fractures me! Man, I flip when I hear that crazy snap! Do another one.

PHIPPS: All right.

(He snaps open another pack of Philip Morris.)

MISS MCF: (Ecstatically) Isn't that the living, breathing end? Do two at once.

PHIPPS: Well, if you insist...

(He does two at once.)

MISS MCF: More! More!

PHIPPS: I'm afraid that's all I have.

MISS MCF: Oh... Well, what's up, prof? What did you want to see me about?

PHIPPS: Oh, nothing in particular. Just wanted to have a little chat, find out how you're enjoying the Shakespeare lectures.

MISS MCF: I don't know, prof. By me Shakespeare is strictly a square.

PHIPPS: Indeed? Well, I must say I find your attitude refreshing. One is so inclined toward slavish admiration when it comes to the Bard. People forget that in many quarters Shakespeare is regarded quite critically. Take, for example, the opinion of Shaw.

MISS MCF: Artie?

PHIPPS: George Bernard... You know, of course, his famous words.

MISS MCF: I sure don't, dad.

PHIPPS: Shaw said he would like to dig up Shakespeare and throw stones at him.

MISS MCF: Did he dig him?

PHIPPS: No, I don't believe so.

MISS MCF: I don't dig him either.

PHIPPS: (Looking at watch) Good heavens, I had no idea it was so late. Come, my dear, I'll drive you home.

MISS MCF: No, thanks. I always walk home. It's good for the circulation in your legs. I got the best circulation in my legs of the whole sophomore class. Ever notice how rosy my knees are?

PHIPPS: As a matter of fact, yes... Look, you sure you don't want a ride home? There's an excellent French movie on the way.

MISS MCF: Not me, dad. I hate French pictures. The sub-titles always disappear before I can read 'em. But if you want to go to the movies, there's a new Tony Curtis picture downtown—a real gut-buster. Tony plays this beggar, see, but he's really a prince only he doesn't know it on account of his sneaky uncle who switched babies when Tony got born. Then Tony finds this magic lamp, see, and he gets into the palace where he meets this crazy girl, only she's engaged to the fake prince, but then they have this mad sword fight, and Tony kills about a million guys, and then he finds out he's the prince and it's real crazy. Wanna go? I've only seen it three or four times.

PHIPPS: As a matter of fact, I just remembered a previous engagement. Sorry.

MISS MCF: That's all right. Thanks for the Philip Morris. 'Bye.

(Exit Miss McPetridge. For a moment Phipps sits in stunned silence, mopping his brow. Then a smile appears on his face. He is a happy man again—out of love. Contentedly he lights up a Philip Morris.)

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This column is brought to you by the makers of PHILIP MORRIS who think you would enjoy their cigarette.

Column No. 9 (350 lines—175 x 2)
College Papers—Fall, 1954



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